PLANNING
MONITORING
AND
EVALUATION

OF

PROGRAMME
PERFORMANCE

...

A RESOURCE BOOK

IDRC Evaluation Unit DRAFT December 1997

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We would like to have your feedback on the approach and its presentation.

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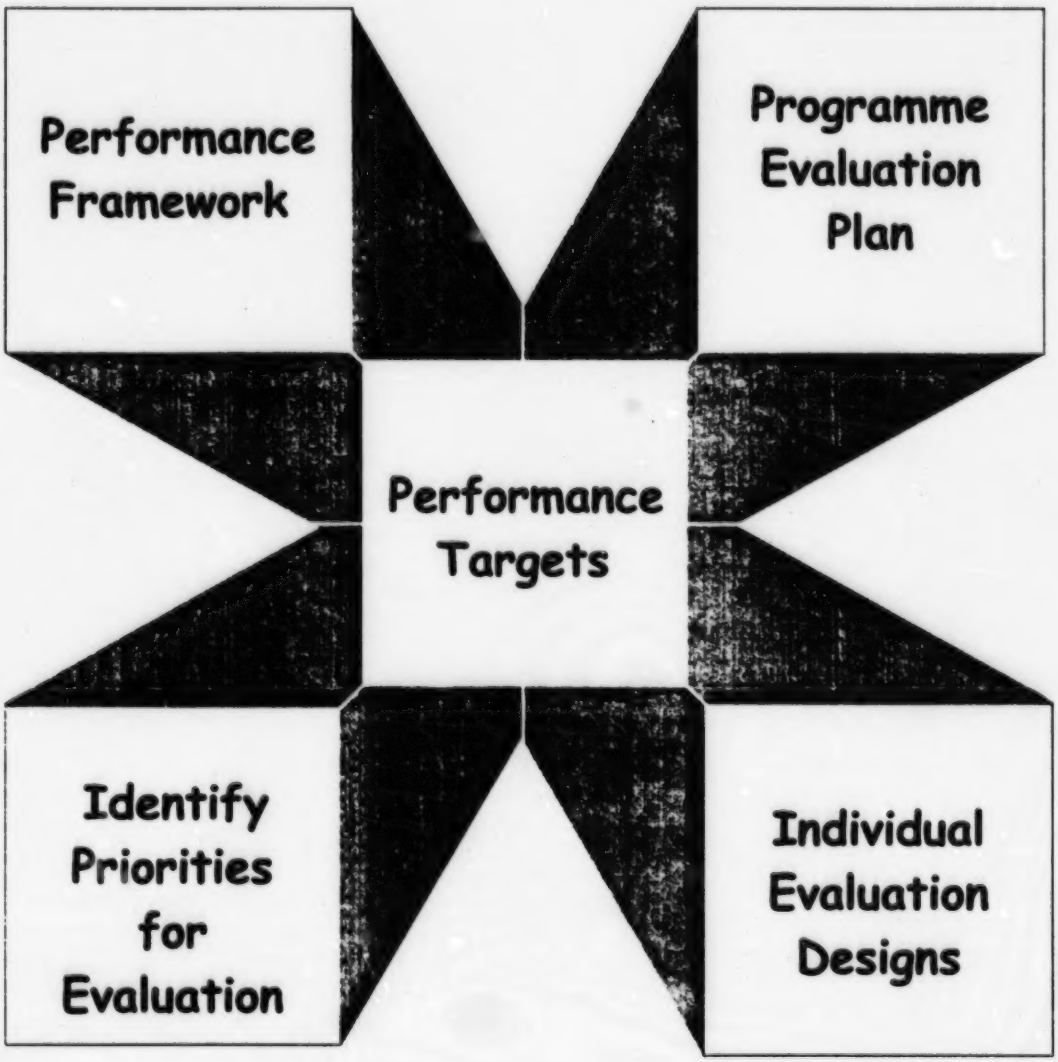
Performance Framework
Programme Evaluation Plan
Performance Targets
Identify Priorities for Evaluation
Individual Evaluation Designs

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a skinny arrow → indicates supplementary resource documentation located in Part V.

Part I ·· INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK IS FOR...

... anyone wanting to build a performance management system to assist in their work and to help get management's approval and funding for their programme. It is also useful in designing an evaluation component for a project to systematically monitor or collect performance or other data.

One of the elements management and others asked to support a programme are concerned with is how you will ensure *good performance of your programme*. For this you need to *plan* and put in place a system or mechanisms that can support managing programme performance and reporting on it. This resource book helps you plan it.

For the Centre, programme performance evaluation and reporting are part of the IDRC Evaluation System tracking corporate performance. For an overview of the system please refer to ➛ Evaluation System in Part V.

The remainder of this introduction sketches how you can use this book and outlines its structure.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE BOOK

This resource book introduces the ideas behind a plan for monitoring and evaluating programme performance. Using those ideas, it helps you pull together a plan guiding with explanations, questions, criteria or checklists, and suggestions.

While the book appears to present a linear process, in actual use the process becomes iterative. You may find yourself jumping back and forth as you refine your work. Jumping back in this case is not a setback; on the contrary, it is a sign of progress.

The approach described in this resource book is not the only way of doing it. It is an approach the Evaluation Unit developed in working with programme staff to adequately represent the work the Centre supports and the kinds of results it can be expected to have. We have been using and testing it with programmes. The approach is adaptable to most contexts. The benefits of working with it will differ depending on the issues tackled. For instance, in the planning stage, the benefit programme teams saw the most was that the process *helped them clarify and focus the programme and bring on board their team and external partners.*

8 GOOD REASONS FOR USING THIS RESOURCE BOOK

1 You know your programme best. Take the driver's seat: *Set your performance criteria.*

2 Show your programme's or project's *contributions and progress.* Programmes and projects have to *demonstrate their performance* and *report* on it. They are accountable for managing resources entrusted to them within their mandate and with appropriate results.

3 Developing a performance framework *clarifies* your programme or project priorities, approaches, and on what basis you will judge progress.

4 Your performance framework and evaluation plan become the *basis of agreement and judgement of progress* both within the programme or project and with higher management or other external stakeholders or supporters. It *brings them on board.*

5 Information on programme or project performance allows you to reassess what you are doing and how you are allocating your resources. *Programme management is an iterative process that needs to be informed by programme data* as much as vision and hunches.

6 You need *information to manage your programme* or project and to know how it is doing. Determine what information to collect *for your own needs, for the needs of your partners, and for higher management or other stakeholders.*

7 Programme performance management and reporting is *part of a larger picture*: accountability of the Centre to Parliament, the Office of the Auditor General, Treasury Board, the Canadian public, and our partners in the South. (➛ Evaluation System in Part V)

8 In sum, this book offers a way to plan the assessment of your programme's or project's performance. It helps you develop a performance framework based on which your programme can be assessed by you or others. For your own accountability reporting, you can plan what and how to monitor and evaluate to track and manage progress.

GETTING STARTED

Start by familiarising yourself with the basic ideas and concepts introduced in Part II. Then browse through the modules in Part III and decide how you want to proceed. In our experience, effective programme performance planning and evaluation requires five elements:

- Develop your own way of *using it suited to your needs*. You can use the book sequentially, but this is not necessary. You may only need selected parts, depending on your task or issue.
- Create the programme *team's buy-in and ownership* and *buy-in of key programme stakeholders*, such as higher management.
- *Leadership* is necessary for planning and implementation to happen.
- Find someone to help move the process along by *facilitating* planning and next steps in your process.
- *Good meeting preparation* will give you better results and more willing participants.

For programme teams, process options include: working with the whole team; working with a sub-team; one programme member prepares a draft for discussion; or a combination thereof. While working in a team initially takes more time, it pays off to have created a common understanding and agreement through a process that allows for some face-to-face discussions at the beginning and on subsequent drafts that a designated person or sub-team may have revised.

THE STRUCTURE

Part II introduces the **basic concepts**. Part III contains the **modules** which support the planning process:

The planning process starts with ➢ how to develop **programme performance targets** - your programme's destination. ☞ **Module 1**

Next it guides through ➢ sketching a road map - your **performance framework**. ☞ **Module 2**

Then you are asked to ➢ identify your information **priorities**. ☞ **Module 3**

These priorities are the basis for your ➢ **evaluation plan** where you need to spell out your commitment in terms of what you want to find out, how, who will be responsible and when. ☞ **Module 4**

For plan implementation, develop ➢ **evaluation designs** which provide terms of reference for the work detailing indicators and data collection. ☞ **Module 5**

Part IV has worksheets and Part V offers some resource documentation.

Each module has an overview of the content, descriptions or guiding questions, and examples.

A hand ☞ refers to (other) relevant text,
a pencil ✏ points to worksheets in Part IV,
a smilie ☺ offers tips for a team process to tackle the task,
a section starting with an arrow ➥ contains other considerations for a module,
and a skinny arrow ➔ indicates other resource documentation located in Part V.

Part II .. CONCEPTS & APPROACH

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE - CONCEPTS & BUILDING BLOCKS FOR AN EVALUATION PLAN

Research is not the filling of a bucket but the starting of a fire.
(with apologies to W.B. Yeats)

In a nutshell, performance focuses on results and how we get there.[1] What are good results and good ways of getting there depends on contexts and perspectives. Performance in the Centre's context of supporting research for development is unlike that of "Widget X Corporation". For the latter, simply put, performance could possibly be measured in terms of product output and quality, good management and customer satisfaction which translates into a profitable bottom line and some portion of market share. Performance in the context of research for development is a different 'beast'.

A programme performance evaluation plan is a means to negotiate a common understanding of what will be considered good performance and what measures or indications can be employed to assess it. This allows the programme team to influence and negotiate performance criteria. These criteria should reflect the essence of the programme but also the programme as the link between organisational mandates and developmental goals, on the one hand, and the project and recipient partner objectives and developmental goals, on the other hand. While such criteria can be set and negotiated, any review of a programme could employ additional or different criteria. Criteria are not set in stone; rather, review, communication and negotiation of the criteria has to occur periodically.

What follows presents the main premises and concepts relevant to performance as the Evaluation Unit has come to understand them and as they underlie this resource book.

THE CONCEPTS

Research, even applied research for development, is *upstream* from direct developmental interventions. Its contribution is to provide new knowledge or adapt existing knowledge to different contexts. This is to feed into processes, decisions, and production that improve people's lives in a sustainable way. It may be a new technology, such as a locally appropriate grain dehuller; it may be a new way of farming, such as inter-cropping; it may be a new way of fetching water to avoid contamination; it may be data and its interpretation on a sector or segment of a population that informs policy debates and decisions; or it may be allowing people to do research relevant to their own context as a basis for becoming part of decision making processes.

To help *understand and capture* research for development and its effects, we can employ a comparison with wind which has ever changing obstacles to airflow in it. Different air currents have to combine to form wind. The analogy is that funding alone does not create anything. We also need people with vision and commitment, among other things.

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1 Standard elements of programme performance include *efficiency*, *effectiveness*, *relevance*, and *financial viability*. Overall it is a question of *appropriateness* and *value for money*. Internal factors influencing programme performance are *capacity*, *motivation*, and *accountability*; these are within the realm of control or influence of the programme. External factors influencing the programme are the *external context* within and outside the organisation within which the programme operates; the programme has at best very limited influence on those contexts.

Wind follows open channels, gets stopped or moves around obstacles, swirls in places, and can change direction. With a research question or issue we start a process of work towards an output: the research results. Throughout the process, the research can begin to influence people -- researchers and others. To enhance the effect of results, we know that the researchers need to have involved and on board the people and institutions they want to take note and be influenced by this research, those the research should reach. The informed assumption is that they are players who can contribute to taking the research findings into the realm of action -- the realm of decision-makers and "doers": farmers, extension agents, health workers, entrepreneurs, civil servants, politicians, etc. Only if knowledge is taken up by people in a relevant context, with good timing -- which is often not predictable -- and applied can it have a change effect, or impact.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I:
But where the trees bow
down their heads,
The wind is passing by.

(Christina Rossetti, 1830-94; Who Has Seen the Wind? stanza 2)

The wind analogy, trite as it may be, serves to point out some important points regarding impact:

- it is most likely *not a linear event* to get from A-the research idea to B-the research output, and even less so, to get to C-the benefit, the latter being the reason for pursuing the research to begin with -- most things in life are not linear; for instance, in research on viable production processes for farming or manufacturing, external factors such as weather, prices or availability of raw materials can render research questions or results futile;
- *things happen along the way*, not only at the end, e.g. once we have an output; effects can occur throughout the research or project process;
- the *direction can change*; this can be a conscious, strategic decision if, for instance, the research team realises that a related element is more relevant to explore than what they initially had planned; this can also be unplanned, if the departure of a key person or the outbreak of a conflict derails the work;
- there are *unpredictable swirls*; the research process and results can have unanticipated and spin-off effects, both positive and negative;
- the *value is in the eye of the beholder*; the sailor may appreciate and need the wind, the farmer is worried about the same wind's effect on the crop; an impact or effect implies a change; no change is free of value or is universally good or benign;
- *for change* to happen, the right *people have to be reached*; the wind does the sailors no good if they do not know it is there, are not motivated to take advantage of it, or cannot harness it because they do not have the right boat or sails; if policy-related research does not reach decision makers in a form they can easily absorb and use, it will remain a study on a shelf;
- just as there is often no clear beginning, there is *no clear end* to the process; in operational terms the beginning and end are defined by a funding cycle; in terms of conception, reach, and impact, funding acts as a catalyst or at least fuel, but running out of "IDRC gas" does not mean they have run out of gas altogether; the process or results of the research can continue to have effects long past the end of the project; the typical examples are basic research or technologies, such as those leading to modern television, that get picked up decades after their initial discovery and, with or without much advancing on the original research, eventually become standard knowledge or mass items. Finding out what reach and impact a process or result has had thus requires tracking.

The dimensions involved then are: research conception, activities and process, outputs, reach, impact, and time.

The concepts central to programme monitoring and evaluation are *reach* and *impact*, described along with activities/outputs and time in the ☞ Concept Glossary on the following page.

THE CONCEPT GLOSSARY

Impact implies *change* of some kind. IDRC's work is premised on wanting to change existing contexts, practices, or systems to improve poor people's lives in a sustainable way -- *developmental changes*. The Centre does this through supporting the creation and application of knowledge. The basic strategy is to build Southern research capacity and skills to generate knowledge and induce or manage change -- in part through sharing research findings to influence people who can (help) change practices and systems in a sustainable way. Depending on the scope of envisioned change, the expectations can have the magnitude of an equivalent of 'silent revolutions'. Once initiated, the process of change takes on its own dynamic. Moreover, no change is universally good or benign; it benefits some and can have negative or no effects on others.

Reach can be understood as an intermediary change, a necessary condition for developmental change (impact). Reach is about *creating and supporting the conditions* for impact. Reach holds the *opportunity* of impact. If there is no channel or opportunity to apply knowledge or learning, reach cannot have impact. Only if knowledge is *taken up* by people and applied can it have a change effect, or impact. A process or finding or technology have to reach people who are intended to benefit from them. This can happen through their direct involvement or through involving intermediaries such as extension workers, policymakers, or advocacy groups.

The relevant groups have to be *touched* by or *become engaged* with the message, process or product of research. If they are reached, there will be *expressions or manifestations of that reach*. Those are clues to determine whether they have been reached. For instance, if research is to feed into a policy process, the expression of reaching the policymakers could be their using the language or ideas of a concept developed with the research; another expression of reach could be the emergence in policy consultations of a new perspective or new debate stemming from research. The same research process and products can also have very different effects at different times on different people or institutions.

Reach is also about creating the conditions or complementary services, processes, or products that can help induce or manage developmental change.

Activities or outputs are the research processes, activities, products or supporting and complementary elements that constitute the anticipated crucial ingredients for a programme to foster in order to achieve programme reach and impact.

Time expresses by when it can be demonstrated that the intended change has been initiated.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PLAN

Building on these concepts to capture Centre-supported approaches and the kinds of results they can be expected to have, the Evaluation Unit has developed a performance framework and a planning matrix which together constitute a *Performance Evaluation Plan*.

The three building blocks of a performance evaluation plan are...

- performance targets;
- performance framework; and
- focussing evaluation priorities

Evaluation designs for each evaluation priority complement the performance evaluation plan and facilitate implementation.

Following is a brief overview of the approach structured in 5 Modules; they are detailed in Part III.

Performance Targets

☞ Module 1

Performance targets describe the destination of your programme and how you envisage getting there. They translate programme objectives into a *set of statements of results* for which the programme is prepared to be accountable. Performance targets should be *within the sphere of influence* of the programme. You would typically develop a small set of performance targets. They should capture the essence of what you want to achieve with your work and how you envisage getting there.

To express this, a target consists of *four elements* as follows and described in the ☞ Concept Glossary:

- impact
- reach
- activities and/or their outputs
- time

Your performance targets will reflect
the main *impacts* you aim to achieve
with
the manifested *reach* and the *activities or outputs*
that you envisage will bring about the impact
and
the *time*frame you estimate is necessary to achieve
the demonstrable initiation of the change.

Other performance factors not typically captured in programme objectives but also bearing on programme performance include *team performance* and *risk management*. If considered critical for successful programme management or appropriate reporting, these could also be captured either in additional performance targets or by including any relevant team or risk factors as they relate to other performance targets.

Performance Framework ☞ Module 2

If performance targets describe your main destinations and how you envisage getting there, the performance framework is the roadmap that shows in a bit more detail the destinations and routes you have chosen. In a sense it is a *programme performance map*. It expands on the performance targets to capture a fuller picture of your *performance criteria* than single sentence targets could contain. The elements are the same: impact, reach, outputs, activities, and time.

Evaluation Priorities ☞ Module 3

Identify your information priorities for programme management and reporting relative to your targets. Keep information collection manageable by being selective. The priorities will be guided by:

- your own needs for information to run the programme,
- the needs of your partners to run their activities in accordance with your and their own criteria,
- your internal reporting requirements, and
- overall the need to be able to show the performance and progress of your work.

Programme Performance Evaluation Plan ☞ Module 4

The identified evaluation priorities are the starting point for your monitoring and evaluation plan. The plan focuses on these priorities and specifies how you will go about monitoring and evaluating for them. Programme monitoring, evaluation and reporting are part of the corporate performance system (→ Evaluation System in Part V).

Evaluation Designs ☞ Module 5

Evaluation designs help plan the implementation of your evaluations. These designs inform evaluation terms of reference detailing indicators and data collection.

Part III .. DEVELOPING A PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PLAN

MODULE ONE - DEVELOPING PERFORMANCE TARGETS

This module discusses...

- What is a performance target?
- Why are performance targets useful?
- How to create a performance target?
- Other considerations for performance targets

WHAT is a Performance Target?

A performance target is a concise statement of...

- **What** change(s) a programme intends to achieve with each objective,
- **Who** the programme needs to reach for change to occur and how they will express that reach (for and with whom the programme will work),
- **How** will change be generated (i.e. through which activities and outputs), and
- **When** (over what 'time-period') the programme plans to do so.

Well defined performance targets should reflect *the main goals and objectives of the programme* and be consistent with the programme's *sphere of influence*. Performance targets should *not* represent the goals of individual projects within the programme.

WHY are Performance Targets USEFUL?

Performance targets are best set early in the planning process and are useful for...

- building team consensus on clearly identified results which the programme intends to achieve and will be accountable for,
- helping the programme team focus programme planning and monitoring in relation to its objectives, and
- establishing reporting criteria necessary for credible documentation of the programme's contribution to development research, development and IDRC's mission.

HOW TO CREATE a Performance Target?

Performance targets are developed using the already existing programme objectives. If objectives change during the planning process, the programme team will need to adjust performance targets accordingly. By the same token, if targets change, for instance as a result of reviews throughout

implementation, the fit of the revised targets with the objectives needs to be considered and any changes documented and reported with a rationale.

You want to have a small set of performance targets that represents the essence or your programme. Typically you would have four or five targets. Generally, the more targets you have, the more information you need to collect to monitor your progress. As that can be costly and does not necessarily add commensurate value, concentrate on tracking only the main elements.

Create your performance targets by...

➤ Identifying **what** the -- one or at most two -- *main changes* (impacts) are expected to be for each programme objective.

Impacts may include changes in 'ways of doing', lifestyle, management, process, policies, etc. Formulate this in terms specific to the programme and note the change relative to existing conditions. 'End point' words -- such as increased, reduced, established -- tend to describe impact (rather than process words -- such as assist, improve, strengthen, promote).
Example: Introduction of policies to increase indigenous control of medicinal plant knowledge.

Then for each change...

➤ Identify **who** are the main groups, individuals, institutions, etc. or complementary processes, services or products that need to be reached in order to move towards the intended changes. Also identify how they will express that the programme activity has reached or influenced them. Both process or end point words can be appropriate.

Identify who needs to be involved or on board with the ideas to make things happen. Formulate this in terms specific to the programme and note the change relative to existing conditions.
Example: The Ministry of Justice will invite indigenous organisations to participate in regional consultations on patents and intellectual property rights.

➤ Indicate **how** : which types of activities or outputs will contribute to bringing about the reach and create impact.

Formulate them specific to your programme, avoiding generic labels (e.g. 'workshops'; specify, for instance, the workshop theme or participant composition as relevant and significant to your work).

➤ Specify **when** (i.e. in what time-frame) these changes are to be brought about.

Once the programme team has identified these main aspects of the programme objective, the information can be *combined into a summary statement - the performance target.*

An example of a target statement is given on the next page. See also ✏ Worksheet A in Part IV.

See the ☞ Concept Glossary in Part II for more details on impact, reach, activities, outputs, and time.

See ☞ Module Two for further examples and guidance on each of the elements (impact etc.).

An example of a performance target is...

> *Over the next 3 years, the Peruvian Ministry of Justice will adopt policies aimed at increasing indigenous control of medicinal plant knowledge and will invite indigenous organisations to nominate representatives for regional consultations on patents and intellectual property rights.*

☺ **PROCESS TIP**

When setting performance targets as a programme team, try brainstorming with cards, flip-chart paper or on a blackboard. Try using a circle chart (see ✏ Worksheet A in Part IV), matrix, table or a basic list to assemble the information needed to develop the target statement. (See also → Resource Bibliography for facilitation resources.)

➥ OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR Performance Targets.

Realistic Monitoring & Evaluation - Performance targets should be within the sphere of influence of the programme and should be developed so they can realistically be monitored and/or evaluated.

Reflecting Programme Goals and Objectives - Performance targets should reflect programme goals and objectives and not those of individuals projects. New projects or activities can be reviewed in terms of their contribution to achieving the targets.

Programmes With Longer Term Objectives - The achievement of performance targets may require periods longer than the time-frame of a programme planning document or prospectus. When creating your performance framework (☞ Module Two), identify interim targets which can be evaluated and reported on in the shorter term.

Targets or Performance Criteria are not set in stone - As contexts change or a different perspective is applied, the understanding of programme performance and expected targets can change. While targets and criteria can be set and negotiated, any review of a programme could

employ additional or different criteria. Periodical review, communication and negotiation of targets and criteria has to occur throughout the life of a programme. A programme team should make itself part of defining any additional or different criteria of assessing performance.

Setting Programme Management or Team Performance Targets - If you are planning to evaluate programme management or team performance, you may find it helpful to define separate targets for that. Programme management or team performance targets can aid you in deciding what and how to monitor to assess how well the team did what it planned to do. You can use the same method as for developing programme performance targets.

MODULE TWO - DEVELOPING A PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

This module discusses...

- What is a Performance Framework?
- Why is a Performance Framework Useful?
- Creating a Performance Framework
- Other Considerations for Performance Frameworks

WHAT is a Performance Framework?

A performance framework provides a *programme performance map*. It expands on the performance targets to capture a fuller picture of your *performance criteria* than single sentence targets could contain. The elements are the same: impact, reach, outputs, activities, and time. It allows the programme team to *further clarify* the programme intentions and approach for each of its performance targets.

WHY is a Performance Framework USEFUL?

A performance framework is useful for...

- mapping out the programme elements to create a fuller picture of what results and approach the programme team plans to be accountable for,
- helping the programme team focus on planning and monitoring the selection and implementation of activities within the objectives of the programme, and
- mapping progress and gaps requiring attention.

CREATING a Performance Framework.

For each of your performance targets identified in ☞ Module One, provide a more detailed breakdown in terms of the activities, outputs, reach, impact and time, described below.

Performance Target	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	REACH	IMPACT	TIME

✏ Worksheet B in Part IV provides a performance framework matrix; see page 21 for an example.

➤ **Activities:** What types of activities are or will be supported by the programme to help achieve its objectives?

Activities can include *action research, starting a listserv, building research networks, training sessions, organizing workshops, etc.* Give descriptions relevant to your programme rather than generic descriptors such as 'training'. Specify the key element specific to your programme such as type, theme, topic or composition; e.g. "training sessions for indigenous organisations on negotiation skills".

➤ **Outputs:** What are the directly observable products, processes or results of each activity?

Outputs can include *publications, policy documents, a set of tools, research agenda, guidelines, training material, a conference, etc.* As for activities, provide as much detail as needed to make the description relevant to your programme.

➤ **Reach:** Who are the main group(s), organisations, or individual(s) that need be involved or reached by the programme to make things happen? What are complementary conditions, services, processes or products? What signs or signals do you expect to see as indications that they have been effectively reached by the programme?

Consider questions such as 'where are the benefits realized?' and 'who facilitates their use and where?'. Relatedly, ask 'who might be negatively affected or left out of the process and what consequences might that have?'.
Generally, reach could include *local policy makers, researchers, women, men, children, NGO community, group leaders, donors, regional educational institutions, clients, beneficiaries, additional funding agents, and other stakeholders.* Identify the reach in terms relevant to your programme rather than generically, as listed above. For instance, rather than 'farmer', to the extent possible elaborate to specify the key descriptor about that group or individual as relevant to your programme; e.g. the crop, sex, socio-economic position, or geographic location. Note the change relative to existing conditions, e.g. behaviours, processes, or content of debates or communication.
Example: The Peruvian Ministry of Justice will invite indigenous organisations to participate in regional consultations on patents and intellectual property rights.

➤ **Impact:** What are the intended effects, changes or results of the programme?

Impacts may include changes in 'ways of doing', lifestyle, management, process, policies, etc. Consider whether impact would be immediate or over the longer term. General examples of areas where programmes want to have impact include *policy change, more efficient systems, stronger institutions, different patterns of work, non-use of a certain resource, healthier communities, improved livelihood options.* To the extent possible, formulate the change specific to your programme and relative to the existing conditions.
Example: Introduction of policies to increase indigenous control of medicinal plant knowledge.

➤ **Time:** What is the timeline for the targeted impact?
For performance targets with timeframes beyond your planning document, this can be used to define 'interim targets', for instance corresponding to reporting cycles.

Here is an example of a performance framework...

Objective					
Performance Targets	**ACTIVITIES**	**OUTPUTS**	**REACH**	**IMPACT**	**TIME**
Over the next 3 years, the Peruvian Ministry of Justice will adopt policies aimed at increasing indigenous control of medicinal plant knowledge and will invite indigenous organisations to nominate representatives for regional consultations on patents and intellectual property rights.	• small research grants programme on medicinal plant policy issues for Peruvian indigenous organisations to feed into national policy debate ...	• medicinal plant policy issues papers • Peruvian Ministry of Justice adopts policy to support participation of indigenous organisation at national and regional policy consultations on medicinal plant use ...	• Peruvian indigenous organisations involved in national and regional policy consultations on medicinal plants ...	• the Peruvian Ministry of Justice will adopt policies aimed at increasing indigenous control of medicinal plant knowledge	over next 3 years (1997-2000) ...
...					

➥ OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR the Performance Framework.

Why the performance framework and performance targets look similar - While they look similar, the framework is a more detailed version building upon the targets. The performance framework provides the programme team with a performance map of their programme; it specifies the directions you have chosen to meet the targets.

Reflect the Programme's Position - A programme is a link between an organisational mandate and projects working with relevant partners to addressing the respective issues. The performance framework should reflect the essence of the programme but also the programme as the link between organisational mandates and developmental goals, on the one hand, and the project and recipient partner objectives and developmental goals, on the other hand.

Reflecting Programme Goals and Objectives - The performance framework should reflect programme goals and objectives and not those of individuals projects. It should be informed by the existing project portfolio but should define the programme envisaged for the planning period. New projects or activities can be reviewed in terms of their contribution to achieving the targets.

Programme Portfolio Management - Mapping your existing activities in your performance framework can visualise programme gaps. Your performance framework can also help you set selection criteria for new activities.

Specificity - Generic terms in your performance framework, such as 'workshops', will make your programme sound like any other programme could sound. Descriptors relevant to your programme will better convey what your programme is about; e.g. community workshops to identify plant use.

The Timing of Impacts - Impacts often are longer term and do not fall within the Programme Prospectus timeframe. If this is the case, you should identify some interim targets in your performance framework to be able to report on progress.

Iteration - Having brainstormed for the performance framework, you may find that a performance target as originally formulated needs to be refined or generally revised. Do not hesitate to change a target; that is part of the process of clarification and focus. Whenever you do change a target, make sure it is still in accordance with your objective or decide whether the objective needs to be revised.

Performance Criteria are not set in stone - As contexts change or a different perspective is applied, the understanding of programme performance and criteria can change. While targets and criteria can be set and negotiated using a performance framework, any review of a programme could employ additional or different criteria. Periodical review, communication and negotiation of targets and criteria has to occur throughout the life of a programme. A programme team should make itself part of defining any additional or different criteria of assessing performance.

☺ **PROCESS TIP**

As a group use index cards to jot down items to fill in each individual framework column. Have each person note down 5 items as bullet points on 5 cards (no more than 6 words per card). Give 10 minutes for brainstorming and preparing the 5 cards. Then have pairs of people discuss their points and agree on the top 5 points to share with the full group. Collect the 5 cards from each pair of participants and put them up on the wall for all to see, discuss, and sort.

Limit the initial round of brainstorming and discussion to 30-45 minutes. Designate an individual or small team to consolidate the results and put out a draft for discussion. Try keeping the most recent copy posted in your meeting spaces to allow for on-going reflection and discussion. (See also → Resource Bibliography for facilitation resources.)

MODULE THREE - IDENTIFYING EVALUATION PRIORITIES

This module discusses...

- ➢ Why identify priorities for evaluation?
- ➢ How to identify priorities for evaluation?

WHY identify PRIORITIES FOR EVALUATION?

Based on the performance framework, the programme team can make *strategic choices* about priority evaluation areas. Comprehensive evaluation or evaluation for the sake of fulfilling requirements are rarely useful and often too expensive. Most useful for management and learning are *selective* evaluations motivated by a focussed set of questions and with the audience or client in mind.

HOW TO IDENTIFY PRIORITIES for evaluation?

Programme teams have flexibility in prioritising and negotiating what gets evaluated and how. Consider the resources available; rather than spreading your evaluation to cover everything in your performance framework, select areas or issues that are *most useful* to evaluate for programme management, programme partners, and/or stakeholders. Not all evaluations have to focus on performance targets and they also do not all have to focus on developmental impact.

Generally, priorities would include areas or issues deemed necessary for programme management and performance reporting. The team could also consider areas or issues that...

- are unique or risky about their programme
- reflect an important set of projects or research approaches
- are anticipated to receive or deserve increasing attention or demand

In sum, the team makes strategic evaluation choices based on what will give you the information you need for your specific purposes, employing a reasonable amount of resources and in a timely way.

☺ **PROCESS TIP** Have each person write down the 5 or 6 questions they consider important to have evaluated -- one question or issue per card or piece of paper. Post them on the wall and sort as a group which ones belong together. Have the group label each of the sorted sets to identify the overriding issue or question. If you need to further prioritise, have each person select their top 3 priorities: each has 6 votes - 3 votes for the 1st priority, 2 for the 2nd, and 1 vote for the 3rd priority. This can be done with 6 sticky dots to place on the cards with the 'label' or by putting tickmarks (✓) on the cards. (See also ➢ Resource Bibliography for facilitation resources.)

MODULE FOUR - PREPARING AN EVALUATION PLAN

This module discusses...

- What is an evaluation plan?
- What are the components of an evaluation plan?

WHAT is an EVALUATION PLAN?

An evaluation plan is a guide which programme teams create to help clarify and organise their evaluation and reporting intentions. It allows you to identify information needs so that mechanisms to collect data can be put in place.

As a planning instrument, the evaluation plan contains intentions and best guesses. For the duration of the programme it remains a working document that is periodically revised.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS of an evaluation plan?

An evaluation plan should include the following components, further described below...

NAME OF EVALUATION	WHO WILL USE THE EVALUATION & HOW	ISSUES TO BE STUDIED	QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED	WHO WILL DO THE EVALUATION	DATE OF EVALUATION (start and finish)	COST OF EVALUATION

✏ Worksheet C in Part IV presents a matrix for an evaluation plan.
See also ➔ Criteria for an Evaluation in Part V.

Name of Evaluation:

Label each of the selected priority areas with a name for reference.

Who will use the Evaluation & How:

Identify the group, individual, institutions, or agencies who will use or should take note of the results from this evaluation (the clients). Consider how to transfer the lessons from the evaluation to the targeted group. This needs to be thought of early on to ensure that those who are to benefit from the evaluation are involved in setting the terms.

Although a primary purpose of programme evaluation is to assess programme performance, consider what makes the evaluation relevant and useful to you and your partners, for instance how it can feed into your management and information needs. If part of the motivation for an activity or project is to strengthen an organisation, any evaluation should be careful to address not only the issues of the donor programme issues but also those relevant to the supported organization and its stakeholders.

In case of multiple uses and/or users, identify priorities. Knowing who will use the evaluation will help identify the information that needs to be collected. The type of report prepared from the evaluation also depends on the user of the information.

Realistically an evaluation report can only be targeted at one or a few select audiences. In cases of multiple audiences, it is sometimes better to have a general report and additional summaries or briefing notes that emphasise the information relevant to each audience separately.

Issues to be studied:

Identify the overall issues of the evaluation. *E.g. network effectiveness; changes in regional policy debates; changes in a country's agricultural research capacity.*

Questions to be answered:

Specify what about the issue you intend to answer. These questions give direction and focus the evaluation. *E.g. Is the XY Network an effective mechanism for creating acceptance of community research on effects of social policies? How has participation in this network evolved? Is the networks input reflected in donor programmes on social policy reforms? Are members and stakeholders satisfied with the network and why?*

Who will do the evaluation:

Identify the group, institution, or person who will conduct the evaluation by type, position, or name. Also, indicate who on the programme team will be responsible for ensuring the evaluation is completed. You should indicate whether the evaluation will be done internally, externally or both. *E.g. External evaluation will be done by consulting firm X, the Research Officer will be responsible for managing the evaluation.*

Date of Evaluation:

Indicate the estimated start and end date for the evaluation. It may be conducted over an extended period of time or it may be a short study. *E.g. start December 1997 and continue quarterly until January 2000 when the final evaluation will be compiled.*

Cost of Evaluation:

Estimate the approximate costs of the evaluations and whether it will be built into the programme budget or come from external resources. This will likely be modified over time but it gives an indication of funds the programme, partner or donor needs to set aside each year for evaluations. Identify the source of the funds.

➥ OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR the Evaluation Plan.

The term 'evaluation' has much baggage attached to it. A badly done evaluation can do a lot of harm. A well done evaluation - from planning and design to implementation and use - can add much value. From evaluation experience of the Centre and elsewhere, some guiding principles emerge that can help ensure that evaluation is a constructive and useful strategic management and learning tool.

See ➔ Guiding Principles for Evaluation in Part V.

MODULE FIVE - EVALUATION DESIGN

This module discusses...

- What is evaluation design?
- What are the components of evaluation design?
- Indicators for evaluation
- Information required for evaluation

WHAT is EVALUATION DESIGN?

Evaluation designs help you plan the implementation of your evaluations. The evaluation design forms the basis for evaluation terms of reference. It outlines...

- what information needs to be collected,
- how and where it needs to be collected,
- when this needs to happen, and
- who will be responsible for managing the evaluation.

Early planning facilitates...

- collection of baseline data, where necessary, and
- building in data collection mechanisms, e.g. in contractual reporting requirements or trip reports, thereby reducing cost of collection.

See also ➔ Criteria for an Evaluation and ➔ Guiding Principles for Evaluation in Part V.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS of evaluation design?

Evaluation designs should include the following information, further described below...

NAME OF EVALUATION	INDICATORS	INFORMATION REQUIRED	INFORMATION SOURCES	RESEARCH METHODS	TIMING	SPECIAL CONCERNS

See ✏ Worksheet D in Part IV for a working copy of the matrix.

Name of Evaluation:

Use your reference label for each of the evaluations.

Indicators:

List the relevant indicators. For assistance in developing indicators, refer to the separate section on ☞ Indicators for Evaluation starting on the next page.

Information Required for Evaluation:

Specify the information to be collected on these indicators.

See also separate section on ☞ Information Required for Evaluation on page 28.

Information Sources:

Who has this information? Where would you look? *E.g. stakeholders, files, PCRs, existing evaluations, etc.*

Research Tools & Collection Methods:

How will you collect this information? *E.g. on-going monitoring, project reporting, interviews, ex-post evaluations, etc.*

Timing:

When and how often will you need to collect this information? *E.g. biannually, at completion of project, during harvest time, after meetings, on market days, etc.*

Special Concerns:

What are some of the assumptions about the methodology, the indicators and the level of measurement? What are some of the risks? How will these risks be managed? What are other concerns that have not been stated? *E.g. assume stakeholders will be available to participate in evaluation; risk that monthly monitoring will not occur unless a formal system is in place to collect data.*

INDICATORS for evaluation.

Indicators translate intangible concepts into their tangible and observable expressions. For instance, 'influence policy' can translate into 'policymakers have started inviting community organisations to participate in consultations and to submit position papers'.

Indicators are the criteria we use to specify what data needs to be collected to answer a question or explore an issue. Performance is assessed based on indicators.

Setting Indicators

The programme team needs to identify a set of appropriate indicators which will serve to assess issues that it has identified as important to monitor. The indicators determine what (type of) information needs to be collected. Defining the indicators and the required information at the outset of the programme will ensure that the team collects the data it needs in the most consistent and cost-effective manner.

The question behind an indicator is: What information can help answer your evaluation questions? Ask ...

	...tell...		
...what will...	...demonstrate...	...what the answer to the question is?	
	...indicate...	...that we are...	... achieving our target?
	...suggest...		... making progress towards our target?

When identifying indicators, the following *characteristics* are *useful to keep in mind*:

Indicators are not universal.

Context-specificity

Indicators are context-specific. *For instance, there is no single indicator for 'good soil'. 'Good soil' is a relative concept, e.g. relative to what you want to plant.*

Direct or Indirect Indicators

Ideally indicators assess the direct issue. Most of the time, however, an indirect indicator is more feasible and therefore more reliably monitored. *For example, if the objective of a project is to improve water quality in a village, a direct indicator would be a certain level of pollutants in the water. It may be difficult for the community or health worker to use a scientific experiment to measure water quality so an indirect indicator could be sought. Better local water quality could translate in girls spending less time walking long distances to fetch clean water and having more time to attend school. The indicator would be girls' consistently higher school attendance.*

Values Attached

Indicators are expressions of the values of those who chose the indicator. Both the selection and acceptance of an indicator depends on values. *For instance, an indicator chosen by a community may not be readily accepted by a scientist: to the farmer a visual check of a crop may suffice to judge the quality of the soil whereas the Department of Agriculture may want to see results of a lab analysis. Girls' school attendance indicates what the families consider an acceptable water quality. But if there is a fuelwood shortage or a high rate of illness among small children, girl's absence from school does not reflect people's perception of the water quality anymore.*

Indicator Combinations

Indicators often work best and sometimes only in combination -- a single indicator does not necessarily tell you enough. *For instance, a weather forecast tells us that there will be wind and it also tells us the speed and direction of the wind. If either piece of information is missing, it is incomplete to the point of being useless in the extreme. In the water quality example, the indicator of girls' school attendance could be combined with changes in occurrence of water-borne diseases.*

Transitory Nature

Indicators are transitory or sometimes seasonal; they need to be reviewed and adjusted. Over the course of the programme, conditions change, objectives are altered, or better indicators are discovered. In these instances, it may be appropriate to change the indicators you are monitoring.

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD INDICATOR

Practical: If progress cannot be measured directly in an efficient, timely, and cost-effective way, then it should be measured indirectly.

Precise: There should be no ambiguity about what is being measured and how so that there is general agreement over the results. For instance, improved quality; 'quality' and 'improved' are vague terms that can be interpreted in many different ways. An indicator has to be specific enough to be understood in only one way.

Adequate: Does the indicator communicate what programme staff and/or stakeholders need to know? Individual or multiple indicators may be needed for each of output, reach and impact.

Reflective of reach: If several groups are affected by the programme and/or activities, then indicators should be segregated to reflect this.

Transparent: The connection between the issue, question, and the indicator should be clear. Assumptions should be open. An indicator should not be simplistic or biased.

INFORMATION REQUIRED for evaluation.

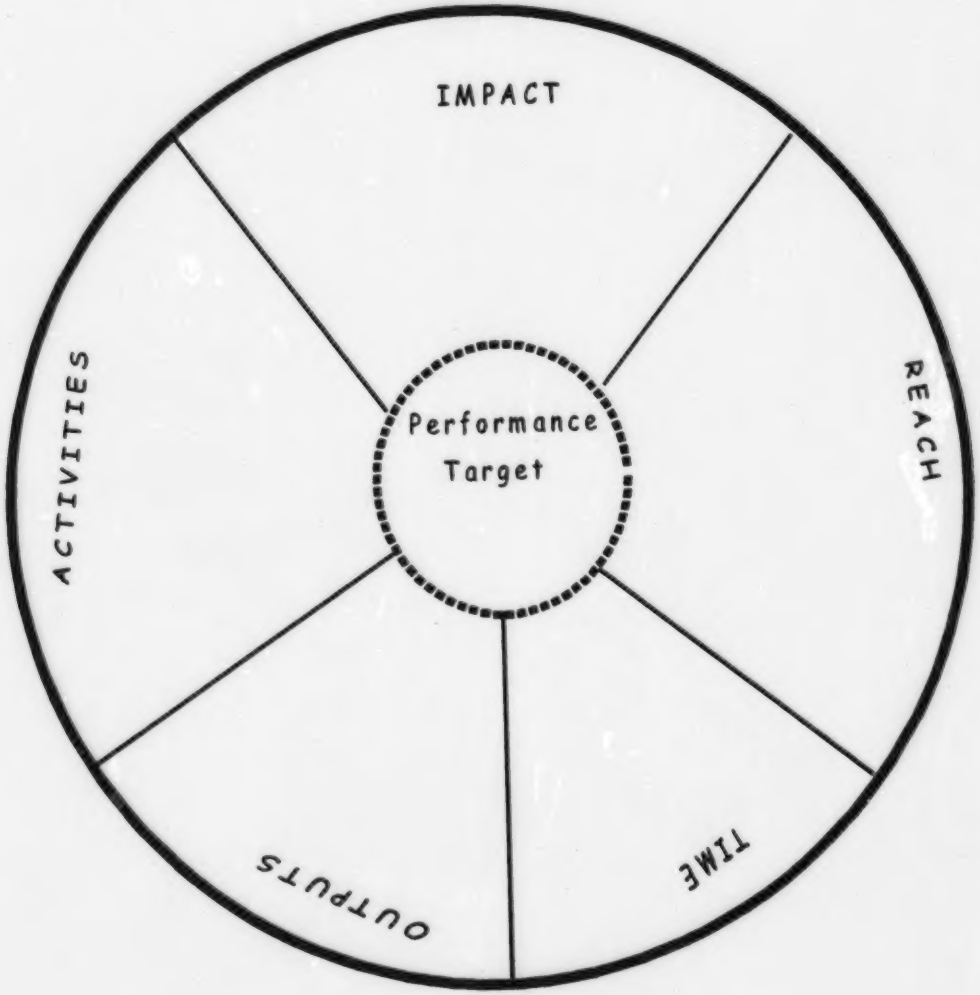
Based on the indicators, consider the information you need to collect. Early planning helps reduce cost and often provides data of better quality because it means collecting current as opposed to historical data. Where relevant, ascertain baseline data at the outset of the programme or respective project. That enables you to discern what contribution the initiative has made.

Early identification of data needs also allows you to write these into reporting requirements such as in contracts and trip reports. This could include collecting periodical follow-up data on baselines or reporting vis-a-vis general programme indicators such as on gender issues or contact with Canadians.

Indicators note progress only if data is collected regularly. Indicators may indicate the need for mid-term activity correction, based on unsatisfactory outputs, diminished or misguided reach, or outcomes which do not correspond to desired outcomes.

Part IV •• WORKSHEETS

WORKSHEET A: SETTING PERFORMANCE TARGETS



WORKSHEET B: PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

OBJECTIVE					
PERFORMANCE TARGETS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	REACH	IMPACT	TIME

WORKSHEET C: PROGRAMME EVALUATION PLAN

NAME OF EVALUATION	WHO WILL USE EVALUATION & HOW	ISSUES TO BE STUDIED	QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED	WHO WILL DO THE EVALUATION	DATE OF EVALUATION (start and finish)	COST OF EVALUATION

WORKSHEET D: INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION DESIGN

NAME OF EVALUATION STUDY	INDICATORS	INFORMATION REQUIRED	INFORMATION SOURCES	RESEARCH METHODS	TIMING	SPECIAL CONCERNS

Part V •• OTHER RESOURCES

IDRC'S EVALUATION SYSTEM

1. WHAT IS EVALUATION?

Evaluation is systematically determining the merit, worth, or value of something. Drawing heavily, but not exclusively, on applied social science research methods, it is used to measure performance and outcomes relative to objectives and intentions.

2. WHY EVALUATE?

- enable corporate learning on how to be more effective in supporting development research;
- improve the quality and management of IDRC's projects and programmes;
- identify successful cases for follow-up and utilization;
- influence policies in IDRC and in the environments in which we support research;
- contribute to the body of knowledge on what works in development research;
- document corporate performance for accountability purposes.

3. CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

The evaluation system requirements of IDRC are strongly influenced by several contextual factors:

3.1 IDRC has committed itself to be a results-oriented organization which learns from project and programme evaluation and which shares the resulting knowledge with others;

3.2 Development "results" achieved through research are often long-term and require other contributors before they materialize. "Results" measurable today may be the products of research investment decisions taken ten or more years ago;

3.3 In a development research context "results" must be defined in terms of both product (research findings) and process (capacity building);

3.4 Development aid policies and the activities of donor agencies are under intense public scrutiny and financial pressure. This creates key audiences for evaluation information.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The main evaluation activities and the respective centres of responsibility are as follows:

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE UNIT
• project & programme monitoring and evaluation	• PIs, Regional Offices and Programme Branch management
• strategic evaluations	• Evaluation Unit
• programme/thematic reviews	• Programme Branch, PIs
• corporate performance synthesis (annual evaluation report)	• Evaluation Unit
• evaluation system design, maintenance & capacity-building	• Evaluation Unit
• evaluating the evaluation system	• Internal Audit, SMC, Board

5. USERS & CLIENTS:

Users and clients may use evaluation outputs as follows:

USERS & CLIENTS	USE OF OUTPUTS
Programme Branch, PIs & regional offices	• for improving programme design and management • identification of cases for follow-up • accountability to senior management & board
senior management	• for resource allocation, policy- and project-funding decisions • accountability to Board, Parliament, and Auditor General of Canada
Board of Governors	• corporate performance monitoring
policy and planning group	• policy review and formulation. • recommending priorities for programme & strategic evaluation. • review & refinement of programme priorities and planning procedures.
library	• dissemination of evaluation publications
corporate communications	• material for publishing, publicity, parliamentary briefings, and the annual report.
finance & administration	• comparisons of costs with performance. • review of procedure and controls

6. SYSTEM COMPONENTS

The accompanying table (Annex A) outlines the project, programme and corporate-level data collection components in IDRC's evaluation system. With the exception of the external review process, all the elements are in place and contributing to corporate performance reporting. Programme evaluation is at the design stage with the PIs just getting their evaluation plans underway.

It is to be expected that the performance reporting system will evolve as the various parts of the Centre implement and participate in it. Elements will influence each other; views on the usefulness of the various components will change as we gain experience with them. The Centre will proceed therefore to test and revise the system according to what it learns from practice, and according to its evolving needs and opportunities. Below is a brief description of each component in the evaluation system.

6.1 PROJECT MONITORING

This is the responsibility of Programme Staff throughout the duration of the project, and is part of established Centre practice in programme management.

6.2 INTEGRAL PROJECT EVALUATION

Selectively--based on risk, size, innovative nature, or other special features of a project--an evaluation may be part of a project's design from the outset. IDRC and the partner institution collaborate in designing an ongoing evaluation which will help guide implementation of the project and measure its impact and effectiveness.

6.3 INTERIM & *EX POST* EVALUATION

On a selective basis, the Centre looks at ongoing and completed projects or groups of projects to assess future funding directions, application or dissemination potential, or impacts. These projects are deemed to be of particular importance to the programme in drawing lessons for future utilization. A large proportion of Centre evaluations is of this type.

6.4 PROJECT COMPLETION REPORTS

A Project Completion Report (PCR) is required for every project over CAD100,000. It addresses basic evaluation issues such as achievement of objectives, lessons learned, capacity-building, required follow-up, dissemination of results, etc. Working with a PCR User Group, the Evaluation Unit refined this instrument and integrated it with the Centre-wide database system. The over 400 completed PCRs accessible in the database, constitute a valuable resource for monitoring corporate performance.

6.5 PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

PIs are responsible for planning and carrying out evaluations which serve their needs *vis-à-vis* assessing programme relevance and effectiveness and which contribute to the information require for programme reporting and review. With support from the Evaluation Unit, the process of planning these evaluations has been initiated in the PIs with full Centre coverage

expected in the next fiscal year. The Evaluation Unit synthesizes the evaluation plans into a corporate performance report on evaluation.

6.5 Strategic Evaluation

On issues of corporate importance that cut across programmes or regions, the Evaluation Unit undertakes strategic evaluations, either independently or in collaboration with other responsibility centres. Designed to codify lessons learned and contribute to corporate decision-making and policy development, these studies may involve the participation of staff members of the responsible institutions and may be led by Centre staff or by outside evaluators. Issues are selected in consultation with programme and senior management and with the Policy and Planning Group. Recent studies include work on Networks, participatory research and project impacts.

NB. The interim, *ex post*, and strategic evaluations all yield evaluation reports which are available in hard-copy and on an electronic analytical database, EVIS (the Evaluation Information System).

6.6 Corporate Programme Synthesis

The Evaluation Unit prepares an annual report on corporate performance. The Annual Corporate Evaluation Report will be based on the Programme initiative evaluation reports, together with strategic evaluations and relevant project evaluations. The report also synthesizes information from the PCR and EVIS database. In addition to what is reported by the responsibility centres, the report addresses issues which relate to the objectives of the Centre as a whole--for example: Canadian partnerships, institution building, networks, or case studies of development impact.

6.7 Programme and Thematic Reviews

The In-Depth Divisional Review (IDDR)--a process of cyclical divisional review put in place in 1984--no longer serves the Centre's organizational needs. The EU will develop a new review policy which will serve the Centre's results-orientation, its new programme structure, and its decentralized management structures. The review cycle will be light in its demands on staff time and will be harmonized with other reporting and review mechanisms, and the CPF cycle. Reviews may include an external perspective and present both retrospective and prospective findings. The reports will be submitted to SMC for comment prior to submission to the Board.

7. Performance Reporting

The Centre's evaluation system produces a wide range of evaluation documentation to support internal management and decision-making, and accountability to our external constituencies including Parliament, the Canadian public and our Southern and other international partners. Much of this information is accessible through IDRC's annual report, its Website and its library.

The attached table summarizes the main components of the evaluation system.

ANNEX A

IDRC's Evaluation System

	PROJECT				PROGRAMME	CORPORATE		
	PROJECT MONITORING	INTEGRAL PROJECT EVALUATION	INTERIM/EX-POST PROJECT EVALUATION	PROJECT COMPLETION REPORTS	PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS	STRATEGIC EVALUATION	CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SYNTHESIS	EXTERNAL PROGRAMME & THEME REVIEWS
COVERAGE	• all projects	• as required for specific projects	• selective	• all projects over $100,000	• all Programme Initiatives (PIs)	• topics of strategic importance to IDRC as a whole	• whole centre	• centre-wide by theme and programme
TIMING	• periodic, frequency dependent on project characteristics	• within project lifetime	• during or after project completion	• <6 months after project completion	• ongoing, 3-year planning cycle	• 2 per year	• annual	• cyclical
RESPONSIBILITY	• Programme Officer	• Programme Officer • project team • responsible institution	• PIs • Regional Office • Programme Branch	• Programme Officer	• PIs • Programme Branch	• Evaluation Unit	• Evaluation Unit	• Programme Branch • Evaluation Unit • Policy & Planning Group • SMC
OUTPUT	• trip reports	• periodic project evaluation reports • final report	• evaluation report	• Project Completion Report (PCR) • PCR database record	• programme performance reports • input to PWB submissions • progress reports to Board	• evaluation report • reports • seminars • publications	• Annual Corporate Evaluation Report	• special report to SMC & Board
USAGE	• day-to-day project mgmt. • input to later evaluation	• project mgmt. • input for progress reports to Board, programme review activities	• programme mgmt. • accountability • design & implementation of future projects • provide evidence of impact • available on EVIS	• corporate memory (IDRIS database) • project design • cross-project synthesis of results • mgmt. information	• programme mgmt. • corporate memory • design & implementation of future projects • provide evidence of impact • senior mgmt. for resource allocation	• improve programme delivery & impact • policy & procedure formulation • available on EVIS	• accountability • centre mgmt. • input to annual report	• programme & centre mgmt. • input to Corporate Program Framework
FOCUS	• progress, project mgmt. issues	• progress towards objectives • relevance of objectives • mgmt. issues • dev't impact measurement	• assess project efficiency, effectiveness & results	• assess project results & lessons learned • signal opportunities for follow-up	• progress towards targets • relevance, mgmt., accountability, impact • draws on project evaluations	• issues related to programme delivery & impact • costs vs benefits • relevance	• relevance, mgmt, accountability, impact	• relevance, mgmt., accountability, impact • draws on project, programme, & strategic evaluations

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATION AT IDRC

The Centre's approach to evaluation is one of selective evaluation based on needs for learning and strategic management. It is not a compliance or policing element and therefore not standardised in either criteria or format.

Evaluation carries much baggage as a term and experience for many people. Some view it as an unnecessary overhead; others had negative evaluation experiences and distrust a notion of constructive and learning evaluation. Some of the **criticisms** levelled against evaluation are...

- ⊖ An evaluation can be shaped to **empower or disenfranchise** certain groups by virtue of the questions it asks and selection of participants, among other aspects.
- ⊖ An evaluation is often so 'independent and objective' that it **loses sight of the needs** of the participants, beneficiaries and managers and becomes irrelevant.
- ⊖ Evaluations can be of limited use because the **evaluators did not understand the issues and context** sufficiently or because they were ill informed.
- ⊖ Evaluation reports can present so much information that they are **difficult to assimilate and use**.
- ⊖ Evaluations **can be lengthy processes** so by the time information is presented, it is no longer relevant to the client(s) current needs.
- ⊖ Evaluation **can consume a lot of resources** collecting vast quantities of information much of which is never analysed or used.

Through a few **guiding principles**, we hope to avoid most of these problems...

- ⊕ At IDRC evaluation is approached from a programme management perspective. It is intended to contribute to decision making, help staff and management improve their programmes and strengthen programme delivery. For evaluation to be **effectively integrated** into the management cycle, an evaluation plan should be based on **continuous consultation and presentation of findings**.
- ⊕ To the extent possible, evaluation should adopt **participatory methodologies** which makes the evaluation transparent and stronger. Involving the participants, beneficiaries and users of the information in the evaluation process gains their interest and allows for integration of their information needs in the evaluation. stakeholders put at risk by the evaluation should have a right to active involvement in the process.

- Evaluation should be **incorporated as part of the design of a project or programme** so that information can be collected when it is available. This reduces the burden in time and financial resources placed on the programme and projects by evaluation.

- Evaluation should **add value not only for the donor but also for those being evaluated**. Evaluation can impose a considerable burden on time and resources of recipient institutions. Donor evaluations for IDRC's purposes should not be carried out without some concomitant contribution to the evaluation needs of the recipient institution.

- Evaluation is both **science and art**. The art of identifying the critical issues to evaluate and to persuade people to participate in the collection, interpretation, and utilisation of information. Those are as important to the evaluation as the rigorous collection and analysis of the data.

- Evaluation is **based on the values** of those who design and carry it out. The outcome of an evaluation does not describe 'reality' but rather one version of reality. **Constructions of reality** are also linked with the context in which they are located: economic, spatial, temporal, social, cultural.

- Evaluations are constructions of reality and **subject to error and evolve** as conditions, contexts and views change. Thus, the usefulness of evaluations is tempered by a clear understanding of the contexts in which they were carried out.

CRITERIA FOR AN EVALUATION STUDY

Here are some factors to consider when planning or reviewing evaluations.

EVALUATION DESIGN

- ❑ **Client(s)**
  Who is the study for?
- ❑ **Purpose**
  What do(es) the client(s) want it for?
- ❑ **Evaluation Issues**
  What are the principal issues to be addressed?
- ❑ **Information Requirements**
  What quantitative and qualitative data is required to address the key issues?
- ❑ **Methodology**
  What approach(es) can be used for data collection and interpretation?
- ❑ **Resource Implications**
  What could be the overall cost of the study (in terms of person days, fees, travel cost, etc.)?
- ❑ **Conclusion**
  Should a formal study be carried out?
  Which methodology and approach appear to be most effective?

Source: Office of Planning and Evaluation, 1986

EVALUATION REVIEW

- ✓ **Audience**
  The evaluation should clearly identify the audience being served by the document.
- ✓ **Purpose**
  The evaluation should provide the reader with a statement of purpose and the objectives of the evaluation.
- ✓ **Quality of Questions to be Explored**
  Clear evaluation questions are either descriptive (what is), normative (what should be) or are impact (cause and effect).
- ✓ **Methodology**
  a. A clear evaluation design should be put forth with an appropriate rationale
  b. Sources of information, samples, and instruments should be identified
  c. Methods for data collection should be provided
  d. Analysis plan should be communicated
  e. Basis for judgement should be put forward with appropriate rationale
- ✓ **Accuracy**
  a. Reliable and valid data should be gathered to provide answers to questions
  b. Data should be put in appropriate context
  c. Information used should be defensible
  d. Analysis of data should be appropriately carried out and used
- ✓ **Report Quality**
  a. Research questions should be answered
  b. An executive summary should be written
  c. Findings and conclusions should be backed by data and sources should be identified without compromising confidentiality, where applicable
  d. The report should fit the audience
  e. The report should be written using an impartial style
- ✓ **Report Use**
  a. Recommendations should be made and directed to the appropriate person or organization
  b. Time lines and cost estimates should be suggested
  c. Priorities should be given with the recommendations

Source: Adapted from Smutylo and Lusthaus: "Review of ISNAR's External Evaluation". Draft, September 1996.

RESOURCE BIBLIOGRAPHY

All of the Evaluation Resources can be found at the IDRC library and the Facilitation Resources can be borrowed from the Evaluation Unit.

FACILITATION RESOURCES

Imaginal Training. **International Facilitator's Companion**, 1996.
There are 12 booklets in this set describing activities such as the following: session design, basic workshop method, ice breakers, role play, and the implementation planning method. The facilitating tools are based on "Technology of Participation Methods".

Belden, Ginny; Marcia Hyatt, and Deb Ackley. **Towards the Learning Organization**, Belden Hyatt & Ackley, 1993.
This book identifies different aspects of team learning and describes some of the skills that can be developed to facilitate a group process.

Williams, R. Bruce. **More than 50 Ways to Build Team Consensus**, IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing, Inc., Palatine, 1993.
This book describes team consensus and identifies certain methods of facilitating team consensus.

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INDICATOR RESOURCES

There is a large amount of material available on indicators. The index to the collection is on **w:\csbdgsi\eval\indicato.inv** and provides perspectives on indicators of different agencies, lists of indicators in use in different fields, and manuals with systems for developing indicators. A scan of the inventory will give an idea of what may be of use to your programme.